

Remarks

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in response to the Office Action mailed December 12, 2002. In the Office Action, the drawings have been objected to and claims 24-27, 30 and 43 are rejected. Claims 28, 29, and 44 are objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim, but contain allowable subject matter. Claims 31-42 and 45-48 are allowed. By this Response, claims 24-30 and 43 are canceled and new claims 51-56 are added. Reconsideration is requested.

Objections to Drawings

The drawings have been objected to because of lack of "prior art" labels for figures 1-7 and for illegible reference numbers. New "formal" drawings are submitted herewith, which should render the objection moot.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102(e)

Claims 24-27, 30, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Steele et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,236). All of these claims have been canceled, rendering the objection moot.

Claim 44

Claim 44 was objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicated, however, that it included allowable subject matter. Claim 44 has been rewritten in independent form. It has not been broadened or narrowed. Hence, claim 44 should be allowable.

New Claims.

New claim 51 is similar in some respects to claim 25, and therefore, the Steele reference is addressed with respect to this claim. Claim 51 recites “a programmable logic array (PLA) having a depopulated array that includes programmable connections only where required to implement certain known functionality.” As discussed in the present application, “depopulation” refers to removing programmable connections (¶ 38). When “programmable connections... have been removed (depopulated).... there is no connection — programmable or otherwise — at that location.” (¶ 41). In other words, that location cannot be programmed or reprogrammed since no connection exists.

The Steele reference includes logic in its CFB's that “can be configured by the user ... as either high performance programmable logic or a block of SRAM.” Col. 4, lines 13-16. In fact, the user can choose whether the CFB will be configured as programmable logic or SRAM. So while the Steele reference programs its VLA 14 to implement various logic equations, Col. 4, lines 1-30, the Steele reference does not depopulate its VLA by removing programmable connections nor does it suggest any benefit to doing so. In fact, the Steel reference allows all of its programmable connections to remain intact, allowing for any to be reprogrammed later. See Col. 5, lines 45-55. Moreover, if it removed programmable connections, the ability to use the CFB as either programmable logic or as SRAM would be greatly inhibited.

Accordingly, Steele cannot anticipate or render obvious claim 51 or any of its dependent claims.

Other Remarks

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and a Notice of Allowance is requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if she can assist in anyway in expediting the issuance of a patent.

Enclosed is a Petition for Extension of Time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 for extending the time from March 12, 2003 to April 12, 2003.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 502466 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, or the fee for additional claims which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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